

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier version and listings.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A device search system comprising a server unit and a client unit,

wherein said client unit comprises:

first request means for requesting said server unit to execute a first search in accordance with ~~a number of~~ first search attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

recognition means for recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

second request means for requesting said server unit to execute a second search in accordance with ~~a second search attribute part of the number of attributes used for the first search~~ in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition by the recognition means that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

output means for outputting a search result from the first search when the recognition means recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device

~~meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when the recognition means recognizes that the search result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.~~

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (previously presented): The device search system according to claim 1, wherein

the output means selectively outputs the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search.

Claim 4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): The device search system according to claim 1, wherein

said client unit further comprises storage means for storing symbol information, including a graphical icon, corresponding to an attribute used for the first search, and

when the search result from the second search is outputted and when the information showing a presence or an absence of at least one device found in the first search is outputted, a presence or an absence of at least one device or each attribute of each device is shown in accordance with a display mode of the graphical icon corresponding to each attribute.

Claims 6-9 (canceled)

Claim 10 (currently amended): An apparatus for searching a database, which holds information for identifying a device on a network and information of various attributes of the device, said apparatus comprising:

first request means for requesting said server unit to execute a first search in accordance with ~~a number of first search~~ attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

recognition means for recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

second request means for requesting said server unit to execute a second search in accordance with ~~a second search attribute part of the number of attributes used for the first search~~ in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition by the recognition means that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

output means for outputting a search result from the first search when the recognition means recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when the recognition means recognizes that the search result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising database control means for controlling a search of the database, wherein attributes of a device controlled by the database include an indispensable attribute registered whenever a device is registered in the database and attributes other than the indispensable attribute, and  
said second request means extracts only the indispensable attribute from the number of attributes used for the first search in order to request the second search.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said output means selectively outputs the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said output means outputs device names and information that shows attributes satisfied by the devices.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising storage means for storing symbol information, including a graphical icon, corresponding to an attribute used for the first search, wherein, when the search result from the second search is outputted and when information showing a presence or an absence of at least one device found in the first search is outputted, a presence or an absence of at least one device or each attribute of each device is shown in accordance with a display mode of the graphical icon corresponding to each attribute.

Claim 15 (currently amended): An apparatus for searching a database in accordance with a query received from a client unit, said apparatus comprising:  
execution means for executing a search in accordance with a search request from the client unit;

database control means for controlling a database in which information for identifying a device on a network and information for various attributes of the device are registered, and for controlling execution of the search for the device in accordance with the search request from the client unit;

reception means for receiving from the client unit a first search for a device which satisfies a number of first search attributes on the network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

recognition means for recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

obtaining means for obtaining ~~at least one~~ a second search attribute for use in a second search from the ~~number of~~ first search attributes for the first search, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes;

search means for executing the second search for a device satisfying the ~~at least one~~ second search attribute obtained by said obtaining means, in response to a recognition by said recognition means that the search result information shows the absence of at least one device; and

output means for outputting a search result from the first search when said recognition means recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition means recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 15, wherein

attributes of a device controlled by the database include an indispensable attribute registered whenever a device is registered in the database and attributes other than the indispensable attribute, and

    said obtaining means extracts only the indispensable attribute from the number of first search attributes for the first search for use in the second search.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 16, further comprising control means for selecting the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said control means returns the search result from the first search to the client unit when a device to be outputted as the search result is present, and returns the search result from the second search to the client unit when a device to be outputted as the search result is not present.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method for searching a database, which holds information for identifying a device on a network and information of various attributes of the device, said method comprising:

    a first request step of [[g]] requesting a server unit to execute a first search in accordance with a number of first search attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition step of recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

a second request step of requesting the server unit to execute a second search in accordance with a second search attribute part of the ~~number of attributes used for the first search~~ in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition in said recognition means that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

an output step of outputting a ~~search result from the first search~~ when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and outputting a ~~search result from the second search~~, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The method according to claim 19, further comprising a database control step of controlling a search of the database, wherein

attributes of a device controlled by the database include an indispensable attribute registered whenever a device is registered in the database and attributes other than the indispensable attribute, and,

in said second request step, only the indispensable attribute is extracted from the number of first search attributes used for the first search in order to request the second search.

**Claim 21 (currently amended):** The method according to claim 19, wherein said output step includes selectively outputs outputting the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search.

**Claim 22 (currently amended):** The method according to claim 20, wherein said output step includes outputting outputs device names and information that shows attributes satisfied by the devices.

**Claim 23 (previously presented):** The method according to claim 20, further comprising a storage step of storing symbol information, including a graphical icon, corresponding to an attribute used for the first search, wherein, when the search result from the second search is outputted and when information showing a presence or an absence of at least one device found in the first search is outputted, a presence or an absence of at least one device or each attribute of each device is shown in accordance with a display mode of the graphical icon corresponding to each attribute.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method for searching a database in accordance with a query received from a client unit, said method comprising:

an execution step of executing a search in accordance with a search request from the client unit;

a database control step of controlling a database in which information for identifying a device on the network and information of various attributes of the device are registered, and executing a search for a device in accordance with the search request from the client unit;

a reception step of receiving from the client unit a first search for a device which satisfies a number of first search attributes on the network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition step of recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

an obtaining step of obtaining at least one a second search attribute for use in a second search from the number of first search attributes for the first search, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes;

a search step of executing the second search for a device satisfying the at least one second search attribute[[d]] obtained in said obtaining step, in response to a recognition in said recognition step that the result information shows the absence of at least one device; and

an output step of outputting a search result from the first search when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each

device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 25 (currently amended): The method according to claim 24, wherein attributes of a device controlled by the database include an indispensable attribute registered whenever a device is registered in the database and attributes other than the indispensable attribute, and, in said obtaining step, only the indispensable attribute is extracted from the number of first search attributes for the first search for use in the second search.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method according to claim 25, further comprising a selection step of selecting the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search and returning the selected search result information to the client unit.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method according to claim 26, wherein

the search result from the first search is returned to the client unit when a device to be outputted as the search result is present, and

the search result from the second search is returned to the client unit when the device to be outputted as the search result is not present.

Claim 28 (currently amended): A storage medium storing a computer program to be executed by a computer to implement a method for searching a database, which holds information for identifying a device on a network and information of various attributes of the device, wherein the method comprises:

a first request step of requesting a server unit to execute a first search in accordance with ~~a number of~~ first search attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition step of recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

a second request step of requesting the server unit to execute a second search in accordance with ~~a second search attribute part of the number of attributes used for the first search~~ in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition in said recognition means that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

an output step of outputting ~~a search result from the first search when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one~~

~~device, and outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.~~

Claims 29-32 (canceled)

Claim 33 (currently amended): A storage medium storing a computer program to be executed by a computer to implement a method for searching a database in accordance with query received from a client unit, wherein the method comprises:

an execution step of executing a search in accordance with a search request from the client unit;

a database control step of controlling a database in which information for identifying a device on the network and information of various attributes of the device are registered, and executing a search for a device in accordance with the search request from the client unit;

a reception step of receiving from the client unit a first search for a device which satisfies a number of first search attributes on the network, the first search attributes

including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition step of recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

an obtaining step of obtaining at least one a second search attribute for use in a second search from the number of first search attributes for the first search, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes;

a search step of executing the second search for a device satisfying the at least one second search attribute[[d]] obtained in said obtaining step, in response to a recognition in said recognition step that the result information shows the absence of at least one device; and

an output step of outputting a search result from the first search when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claims 34-36 (canceled)

Claim 37 (previously presented): A system according to claim 1, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and the output means displays on a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 38 (previously presented): An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and said output means displays on a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 39 (previously presented): An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and said output means displays on a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 40 (previously presented): A method according to claim 19, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and said output step outputs to a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 41 (previously presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing

attribute, and a print layout attribute, and said output step outputs to a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 42 (previously presented): A storage medium according to claim 28, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and the output step outputs to a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 43 (previously presented): A storage medium according to claim 33, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and the output step outputs to a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 44 (currently amended): A computer program product embodying a computer program for implementing a method for searching a database, which holds information for identifying a device on a network and information of various attributes of the device, wherein the method comprises:

a first request step of requesting a server unit to execute a first search in accordance with ~~a number of first search~~ attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition step of recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

a second request step of requesting the server unit to execute a second search in accordance with a second search attribute part of the number of attributes used for the first search in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition in said recognition means that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

an output step of outputting a search result from the first search when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 45 (currently amended): The program product according to claim 44, wherein the method further comprises a control step of controlling a search of the database, such that

attributes of a device controlled by the database include an indispensable attribute registered whenever a device is registered in the database and attributes other than the indispensable attribute, and,

in the second request step, only the indispensable attribute is extracted from the ~~number of~~ first search attributes used for the first search in order to request the second search.

Claim 46 (currently amended): The program product according to claim 44, wherein the output step includes selectively outputs outputting the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search.

Claim 47 (currently amended): The program product according to claim 45, wherein the output step includes outputting outputs device names and information that shows attributes satisfied by the devices.

Claim 48 (previously presented): The program product according to claim 45, wherein the method further comprises a storage step of storing symbol information, including a graphical icon, corresponding to an attribute from the second search, wherein, when the search result information under the second condition is outputted and when information showing a presence or an absence of at least one device found in the first search is outputted, a presence or an absence of is shown in accordance with a display mode of the graphical icon corresponding to each attribute.

Claim 49 (previously presented): A program product according to claim 44, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and the output step outputs to a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 50 (currently amended): A computer program product embodying a computer program for implementing a method for searching a database in accordance with query received from a client unit, wherein the method comprises:

an execution step of executing a search in accordance with a search request from the client unit;

a database control step of controlling a database in which information for identifying a device on the network and information of various attributes of the device are registered, and executing a search for a device in accordance with the search request from the client unit;

a reception step of receiving from the client unit a first search for a device which satisfies a number of first search attributes on the network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition step of recognizing whether result information obtained from the first search shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

an obtaining step of obtaining at least one a second search attribute for use in a second search from the number of first search attributes for the first search, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes;

a search step of executing the second search for a device satisfying the ~~at least one second search attribute~~<sub>[[d]]</sub> obtained in said obtaining step, in response to a recognition in said recognition step that the result information shows the absence of at least one device; and

an output step of outputting ~~a search result from the first search when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition step recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.~~

Claim 51 (currently amended): The program product according to claim 50, wherein

attributes of a device controlled by the database include an indispensable attribute registered whenever a device is registered in the database and attributes other than the indispensable attribute, and,

in the obtaining step, only the indispensable attribute is extracted from the ~~number of first search~~ attributes for the first search for use in the second search.

Claim 52 (previously presented): The program product according to claim 51, wherein the method further comprises a selection step of selecting the search result from the first search or the search result from the second search and returning the selected search result information to the client unit.

Claim 53 (previously presented): The program product according to claim 52, wherein

the search result from the first search is returned to the client unit when a device to be outputted as the search result is present, and

the search result from the second search is returned to the client unit when the device to be outputted as the search result is not present.

Claim 54 (previously presented): A program product according to claim 50, wherein the second search is executed based on at least one of a color printing attribute, a finishing attribute, and a print layout attribute, and the output step outputs to a display unit at least one printer identifier that corresponds to a printer found in the second search.

Claim 55 (currently amended): A device search system comprising a server unit and a client unit,

wherein said client unit comprises:

a first request unit adapted to request said server unit to execute a first search in accordance with ~~a number of first search~~ attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition unit adapted to recognize whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

a second request unit adapted to request said server unit to execute a second search in accordance with a second search attribute part of the number of attributes used for the first search in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition by the recognition unit that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

an output unit adapted to output a search result from the first search when the recognition means recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when the recognition means recognizes that the search result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 56 (currently amended): An apparatus for searching a database, which holds information for identifying a device on a network and information of various attributes of the device, said apparatus comprising:

a first request unit adapted to request said server unit to execute a first search in accordance with ~~a number of~~ first search attributes in order to search for a desired device on a network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition unit adapted to recognize whether result information obtained from the first search executed by said server unit shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

a second request unit adapted to request said server unit to execute a second search in accordance with ~~a second search attribute part of the number of attributes used for the first search~~ in order to search for a desired device on the network, in response to a recognition by the recognition unit that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes; and

an output unit adapted to output ~~a search result from the first search when the recognition means recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when the recognition means recognizes that the search result information shows the absence of at least one~~

device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 57 (currently amended): An apparatus for searching a database in accordance with a query received from a client unit, said apparatus comprising:

an execution unit adapted to execute a search in accordance with a search request from the client unit;

a database control unit adapted to control a database in which information for identifying a device on a network and information for various attributes of the device are registered, and for controlling execution of the search for the device in accordance with the search request from the client unit;

a reception unit adapted to receive from the client unit a first search for a device which satisfies ~~a number of first search~~ attributes on the network, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

a recognition unit adapted to recognize whether result information obtained from the first search shows a presence or an absence of at least one device;

an obtaining unit adapted to obtain ~~at least one a second search~~ attribute for use in a second search from the ~~number of first search~~ attributes for the first search, the second search attribute being the type attribute extracted from the first search attributes;

a search unit adapted to execute the second search for a device satisfying the ~~at least one second search~~ attribute obtained by said obtaining unit, in response to a

recognition by said recognition unit that the search result information shows the absence of at least one device; and

an output unit adapted to output ~~a search result from the first search when said recognition unit recognizes that the result information shows the presence of at least one device, and for outputting a search result from the second search, which shows, for each device completely meeting attributes used for the second search, that the device meets the attributes used for the second search, and shows, for each device incompletely meeting the attributes used for the second search, at least one of the attributes that the device meets and a remainder of the attributes distinguishably from each other, when said recognition unit recognizes that the result information shows the absence of at least one device, for each device searched in the second search, information indicating a device type corresponding to the second search attribute and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for the second search attribute from the first search attributes.~~

Claims 58-60 (canceled)

Claim 61 (currently amended): A device search apparatus comprising:  
a first display unit, adapted to display result information obtained from a device search executed under a first search condition in which ~~a number of first search attributes are designated, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;~~

an extraction unit, adapted to extract ~~a part of the number of the type attribute from the first search~~ attributes designated in the first search condition for use as a second search condition;

a request unit, adapted to request a device search under the second search condition; and

a second display unit, adapted to display, for each device completely meeting the second search condition, ~~that the device meets the second search condition, and to display, for each device incompletely meeting the second search condition, at least one attribute in the second search condition that the device meets and other attributes distinguishably from each other~~ information indicating a device type corresponding to the type attribute used as the second search condition and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for use as the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 62 (previously presented): An apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the number of attributes designated in the first search condition include an indispensable attribute and an optional attribute, and an attribute extracted by said extraction unit for the second search condition are defined as an indispensable attribute.

Claim 63 (previously presented): An apparatus according to claim 61, further comprising a recognition unit, adapted to recognize whether at least one device that meets the first search condition has been found, wherein said extraction unit extracts a part of the number of attributes designated in the first search condition in response to a recognition result by said recognition unit.

Claim 64 (previously presented): An apparatus according to claim 61, wherein devices found in the device search under the first and second search conditions are displayed distinguishably from each other.

Claim 65 (currently amended): A device search method comprising:

a first display step of displaying result information obtained from a device search executed under a first search condition in which ~~a number of first search~~ attributes are designated, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

an extraction step of extracting ~~a part of the number of the type attribute from the first search~~ attributes designated in the first search condition for use as a second search condition;

a request step of requesting a device search under the second search condition; and

a second display step of displaying, for each device completely meeting the second search condition, that the device meets the second search condition, ~~and displaying, for each device incompletely meeting the second search condition, at least one attribute in the second search condition that the device meets and other attributes distinguishably from each other~~ information indicating a device type corresponding to the type attribute used as the second search condition and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for use as the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 66 (currently amended): A method according to claim 65, wherein the number of first search attributes designated in the first search condition include an indispensable attribute and an optional attribute, and [[an]] the attribute extracted by said extraction unit for the second search condition are is defined as an indispensable attribute.

Claim 67 (previously presented): A method according to claim 65, further comprising a recognition step of recognizing whether at least one device that meets the first search condition has been found, wherein said extraction step includes extracting a part of the number of attributes designated in the first search condition in response to a recognition result in said recognition step.

Claim 68 (previously presented): A method according to claim 65, wherein devices found in the device search under the first and second search conditions are displayed distinguishably from each other.

Claim 69 (concurrently amended): A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for implementing a device search method, wherein the method comprises:

a first display step of displaying result information obtained from a device search executed under a first search condition in which a number of first search attributes are designated, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

an extraction step of extracting ~~a part of the number of the type attribute from the first search~~ attributes designated in the first search condition for use as a second search condition;

a request step of requesting a device search under the second search condition; and

a second display step of displaying, for each device completely meeting the second search condition, that the device meets the second search condition, ~~and displaying, for each device incompletely meeting the second search condition, at least one attribute in the second search condition that the device meets and other attributes distinguishably from each other~~ information indicating a device type corresponding to the type attribute used as the second search condition and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for use as the second search attribute from the first search attributes.

Claim 70 (currently amended): A computer program product embodying a program for implementing a device search method, wherein the method comprises:

a first display step of displaying result information obtained from a device search executed under a first search condition in which ~~a number of first search~~ attributes are designated, the first search attributes including a type attribute indicating a device type and a function attribute indicating a device function;

an extraction step of extracting ~~a part of the number of the type attribute from the first search~~ attributes designated in the first search condition for use as a second search condition;

a request step of requesting a device search under the second search condition; and

a second display step of displaying, for each device completely meeting the second search condition, that the device meets the second search condition, ~~and displaying, for each device incompletely meeting the second search condition, at least one attribute in the second search condition that the device meets and other attributes distinguishably from each other~~ information indicating a device type corresponding to the type attribute used as the second search condition and information indicating to what extent the device meets the function attribute not extracted for use as the second search attribute from the first search attributes.